

## Report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

### Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

**Date: 20 July 2017**

**Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry Draft Terms of Reference – The impact of Child Poverty on Attainment, Achievement and Attendance**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Summary of Main Issues

Leeds City Council has an ambition to be the best council in the UK: fair, open, compassionate and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful. The City's vision encompasses the aim to be a Child Friendly City by 2030. The methodology for delivering this vision is defined in The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2015-19 from good to great which details five headline outcomes. These outcomes are:

- All children and young people are safe from harm
- All children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life
- All children and young people choose healthy lifestyles
- All children and young people are happy and have fun growing up
- All children and young people are active citizens

The CYPP also states that a child friendly city is a city where the affects of child poverty are minimised and where the social and economic benefits of growth are enjoyed by all.

At its meeting on the 15 of June 2017, the Scrutiny Board considered potential sources of work for the 2017/18 municipal year. Following discussion with representatives from Children's Services the Board expressed a desire to undertake an inquiry which would consider the effect of child poverty on educational

attainment, achievement and school attendance. The Scrutiny Board expressed a desire to understand how the impact of child poverty on a child's education is being challenged strategically and practically and also how the impact is managed in order to improve educational outcomes for children, particularly those who are vulnerable, in order to narrow the attainment/achievement gap and improve school attendance.

## **2. Recommendation**

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

- a) Note the information contained within this report, make further recommendation to update the terms of reference where necessary and agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- b) Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Children's Services Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Boards inquiry into the Impact of Child Poverty on Attainment, Achievement and Attendance.

### **Terms of Reference**

## **2. Scope of the Inquiry**

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 15 of June 2017 resolved to undertake an inquiry looking at the impact of child poverty on attainment, achievement and attendance. The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- How child poverty is defined by Leeds City Council and the Children and Young Peoples Trust Board.
- The legislative framework and the duties on local authorities and other delivery partners in England to tackle child poverty, conduct a local needs assessment, or produce a child poverty strategy.
- The prevalence of child poverty in Leeds and the trend over the past 5 years to identify the scale of the challenge. The statistical data and trends that link poverty to poor achievement, attainment and attendance, and the statistical data that links poverty to vulnerable children.
- National research about the link between poverty and educational outcomes and the steer and focus this has provided to services for children in Leeds. The view about the link between poverty and attendance, attainment and achievement in Leeds.
- The strategic approach to minimising the impact of child poverty on attainment, achievement and attendance. How is this being driven, co-ordinated and is it maintaining momentum? What have been the results, what are the aims, objectives and outcomes defined which will support children and young people to be do well in education. Is there a plan, how is this broken down, communicated, monitored and reviewed?
- The initiatives in place in Leeds currently to build resilience and support for learning through schools and partners in areas of high poverty.

- 2.3 Additional guidance has been invited from Children's Services in order to recommend areas of focus for the inquiry. A presentation will be made to the Scrutiny Board on the 20 July 2017.

## **3. Desired Outcomes and Measures of Success**

- 3.1 In conducting the Inquiry the Board wishes to understand the areas defined in paragraph 2.1. If during the course of the inquiry it is evident that improvements are

required the Scrutiny Board will seek to clarify what is being done to ensure better outcomes and will make recommendations as deemed appropriate.

- 3.2 It is important to consider how the Scrutiny Board will deem if their inquiry has been successful in making a difference to local people. Some measures of success may be obvious at the initial stages of an inquiry and can be included in these terms of reference. Other measures of success may become apparent as the inquiry progresses and discussions take place.
- 3.3 Following the inquiry the Scrutiny Board will publish its report which will identify clear desired outcomes. These will be reflected in the recommendations made. The director or organisation to whom the recommendations have been made will be responsible for monitoring the impact of each recommendation and for advising the Scrutiny Board accordingly as the board reviews progress.

#### **4. Comments of the relevant Director and Executive Member**

- 4.1 In line with Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 12.1 where a Scrutiny Board undertakes an Inquiry the Scrutiny Board shall consult with any relevant Director and Executive Member on the terms of reference.

#### **5. Submission of evidence**

Evidence will be sought to enable the Scrutiny Board to gain clarity of all areas defined in paragraph 2.1. To achieve this the Board may also seek evidence in order to:

- Understand the City picture, areas of high deprivation, how this correlates with achievement, attainment and attendance and the connection with vulnerable learners. This will involve the study and analysis of detailed data.
- Identify and understand barriers and how these are overcome such as:
  - a) inclusion in the school community and extra-curricular activities due to cost.
  - b) ability to be able to provide school uniform or adequate clothing.
  - c) ability to provide adequate nutrition (child hunger).
  - d) take up of free school meals and the use of pupil premium
  - e) ability to provide stable learning support in the home.
  - f) fitting in with peers in the school or learning environments.
- Coping and support strategies of education providers in areas of high poverty. Cluster strategies in areas of high poverty and identifying any educational establishments where children are making good progress despite the challenges of high poverty.
- Identify the challenge provided through School improvement and Governor support services and how those service areas are drivers for strategic and practical change to reduce the impact of child poverty in education.

- Identify how child poverty strategies & plans in Leeds inform Children's Services commissioning and resources allocation for children and families in poverty, to support attainment, achievement and attendance.
- Identify if there is targeted intelligence gathering through Voice and Influence, relating to the thoughts and feelings of children living in poverty and how it impacts on them at school, including how this information is collected, utilised, acted upon and how is this reflected.

## **6. Timetable for the inquiry**

- 6.1 Following the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 it is anticipated that evidence gathering for the inquiry will take place between September 2017 and will be completed during or before December 2017. Information will be gathered using a range of methods including meetings and visits. The inquiry report will be prepared for agreement by the Scrutiny Board in April 2018. The length of the inquiry and range of evidence to be collected is however subject to change by agreement of the Board. A decision to extend the length of the inquiry beyond December 2017 could potentially delay the submission and agreement of the final inquiry report.

## **7. Witnesses**

- 7.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:
- Members of the Children's Trust Board
  - Elected Members
  - Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations
  - Stakeholders, Partners and Support Groups
  - Director of Children and Families and Children's Services Officers
  - Education Practitioners.
  - Cluster Representatives
  - Parents and Carers
- 7.2 The Board will always seek to include the views of children and young people and their parents and carers as evidence to its inquiries wherever possible and practicable.
- 7.3 The Board may also undertake visits in order to gather the views of those giving evidence. It is suggested that the Board identify which areas to visit following data analysis in order to identify which educational establishment or Cluster Partnership will provide the most beneficial insight into the impact of child poverty on achievement, attainment and attendance. During previous inquiries, the Board has resolved to undertake visits instead of conducting a full Board meeting. Should the Board wish to do this, it is suggested that visits are undertaken in November 2017.

## **8 Corporate Considerations**

### **8.1 Consultation and Engagement**

The Board may undertake consultation in order to conduct the inquiry or gather necessary evidence should it be deemed appropriate.

## **8.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.**

- 8.2.1 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 8.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 8.2.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 8.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

## **8.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

This inquiry will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2015-2019 and the Child Friendly City Priority Plan.

## **8.4 Resources and Value for Money**

There is no resource or value for money implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified impact will be reported in the final inquiry report.

## **8.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

None

## **8.6 Risk Management**

There are no risk implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified risk will be reported in the final inquiry report.

## **8.7 Recommendations**

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

- 8.7.1 Note the information contained within this report, make further recommendation to update the terms of reference where necessary and agree the terms of reference for the inquiry.
- 8.7.2 Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information during the inquiry should the Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence.

## **8.8 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.